

Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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R 201150Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9340X

INFO DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE ECJ2

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS CAIRO 0724

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LE

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS ON LEBANESE CRISIS

REF: CAIRO 0683 191410 JANUARY 76

1. IN CONTRAST TO IMPRESSION OF HECTIC DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY ON LEBANESE CRISIS IN CAIRO PREVIOUS DAY (REFTEL), LOCAL DAILIES JANUARY 20 ADPOT MOOD OF BLEAK PESSIMISM IN COVERAGE OF DETERIORATING SITUATION. ONLY AKHBAR, IN LATE EDITIONS CARRIES AFP STORY OF MININT SHAM'UN'S CHARGE THAT SYRIAN "ARMY" HAD ENTERED BEKAA VALLEY AND HIS CALL FOR LEBANESE PERMREP GHORRA TO RAISE SYRIAN INTERVENTION AT UNSC, WHILE ALL PAPERS CONCENTRATE ON CARNAGE IN KARANTINA DISTRICT OF BEIRUT AND GUMHURIYYA BANNER-HEADLINES "COMPLETE CHAOS UNCLASSIFIED

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PERVADES LEBANON.

2. LOCAL DAILIES REPORT WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM EFFORTS TO PERSUADE PRIMIN KARAMI TO STAY IN OFFICE, WHILE AKHBAR EDITORIAL WONDERS WHETHER KARAMI WILL BE LAST PRIMIN OF UNIFIED LEBANON. EGYPTIAN PRESS REPORTS WANLY THAT ARAB LEAGUE SECGEN RIAD HAS CALLED FOR ARAB SUMMIT TO DEAL WITH LEBANESE CRISIS, WHILE AHRAM'S 'ALI HAMDI AL-GAMAL LEADS SELF-FLAGELLATING EDITORIALISTS, BEMOANING FACT THAT NON-ARAB FRENCH CONSIDERING RAISING LEBANESE QUESTION IN UNSC, WHILE ARABS CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO PUT OWN HOUSE IN ORDER, ALL EDITORIALS CONCLUDE THAT ONLY ISRAEL GAINS FROM COLLAPSE IN LEBANON, BUT EDITORIALISTS PRESENT NO SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEM.

3. ALL LOCAL DAILIES REPORT JANUARY 19 SIT-IN AT LEBANESE EMBASSY CAIRO BY 200 LEBANESE STUDENTS. STUDENTS DENOUNCED PHALANGISTS AND SHAM'UNIST LIBERALS AND TURNED PORTRAIT OF PRESIDENT FRANJIYA UPSIDE DOWN IN EMBASSY COURTYARD. OBVIOUSLY EXASPERATED LEBANESE AMBASSADOR MUHAMMAD SABRA, WHO HAS ACHIEVED LITTLE DESPITE CONTINUOUS ROUND OF CAIRO DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS, STATED THAT HE SYMPATHIZED WITH STUDENTS, WHO "EXPRESSED FEELINGS OF EVERY LOYAL LEBANESE NATIONALIST."

4. COMMENT: AS LEBANESE SITUATION BECOMES MORE BLOODY AND MORE CHAOTIC, EGYPTIAN PERCEPTION THAT CAIRO CANNOT INFLUENCE OR DETER SELF-IMMOLATION OF SISTER ARAB STATE BOUND TO BE PAINFUL. AT PRESENT, MOOD IN CAIRO PRESS ONE OF DESPAIR, BUT THIS COULD CHANGE TO ANGER IN WAKE OF REPORTS OF LARGE-SCALE SYRIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT (WHETHER DISGUISED AS SA'IQA OR PLA), WHICH BROKE TOO LATE TO MAKE OTHER THAN AKHBAR LATE EDITIONS AND HAVE NOT BEEN SUBJECT TO EDITORIAL COMMENT. SPECTRE OF ISRAELI INTERVENTION, RAISED AGAIN BY DEFMIN PERES JANUARY 19, WAS NOT MENTIONED IN CAIRO PRESS, ALTHOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY IT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MOOD OF GLOOM IN CAIRO.
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